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E.O. 12958: NA

TAGS: KCRM KWMN PHUM PREL HR TRAFFICKING

SUBJECT: CROATIAN ANTI-TIP EFFORTS PAY OFF IN 2006; 1 TIP and 2 TIP-RELATED CONVICTIONS AGAINST 5 PERPETRATORS

¶1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: As part of the Government of Croatia's coherent and well-structured approach to fighting trafficking in persons (TIP), GOC successfully prosecuted several trafficking cases, increasing the numbers of TIP and TIP-related convictions to five in 2006. Embassy Zagreb commends GOC efforts as it continues its energetic fight against trafficking. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

¶2. The GOC's National TIP coordinator, Luka Maderic (also Head of the Government Office of Human Rights), recently advised Embassy of one TIP and two TIP-related convictions that occurred during calendar year 2006. In January 2006, one appealable verdict against one defendant was passed based on TIP Provision 175 in the penal code. In addition, in February 2006, one final verdict was passed against two defendants for slavery and international prostitution. Finally, in October 2006, one appealable verdict was passed against two defendants for slavery, international prostitution and illegal capture. (As the crimes in the second and third cases occurred prior to the implementation of the TIP Provision in October 2004, these cases were prosecuted and convicted under the legal provisions that existed prior to the adoption of the TIP provision in the Croatian Penal Code.)

¶3. GOC efforts to convict traffickers are finally beginning to bear fruit as cases work their way through the backlogged Judicial System. While in previous years we criticized the GOC for having no TIP convictions, five defendants have learned during 2006 the GOC is clearly committed to standing by its National Action Plan, Operational Plan, legal framework and enforcement infrastructure.

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